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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL
USES OF OUTER SPACE
Thirty-ninth session
3-14 June 1996

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

**To be convened at the United Nations Office at Vienna,
on Monday, 3 June 1996, at 3 p.m.**

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Statement by the Chairman.
3. General exchange of views.
4. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.*
5. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-third session (A/AC.105/637).
6. Report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.105/639).
7. Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.
8. Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status.
9. Other matters.
10. Report of the Committee to the General Assembly.

*Priority item in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/27, paragraph 41, of 6 December 1995.

ANNOTATIONS*

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

Item 2: Statement by the Chairman

1. Following the adoption of the agenda by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the organization of work, the Chairman will make a statement reviewing developments of relevance to the work of the Committee that have taken place since its thirty-eighth session. The indicative schedule of work, which will be followed with flexibility, is contained in the annex to the present document.

Item 3: General exchange of views

2. The Committee will begin its substantive work with a general exchange of views. (Delegations wishing to speak under item 3 are asked to submit their names to the Secretariat as soon as possible.)

Item 4: Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes

3. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/27, paragraph 41, requested the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-first session.

4. The General Assembly, in paragraph 40 of the same resolution, took note of the views expressed during the thirty-eighth session of the Committee and during the fiftieth session of the Assembly concerning ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

Item 5: Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-third session (A/AC.105/637)

5. At its thirty-third session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/27, paragraph 17, considered the items below.

(a) United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the coordination of space activities within the United Nations system

(b) Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

6. The Subcommittee considered jointly, on a priority basis, the two above-mentioned items (A/AC.105/637, paras. 21-59). The report of the Subcommittee contains a review of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and its activities for 1995 and 1996 and a proposed programme of activities for 1997, which it recommended for approval (A/AC.105/637, paras. 26-36).

7. Regarding the coordination of space activities within the United Nations system, the Subcommittee continued to stress the necessity of ensuring such coordination (A/AC.105/637, para. 42).

8. On the question of regional and interregional mechanisms of cooperation, the Subcommittee noted the efforts undertaken as part of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, in response to General Assembly resolution 45/72, to establish regional centres for space science and technology education in

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*The annotations and the indicative schedule of work are not part of the agenda to be adopted by the Committee.

existing national or regional educational institutions in developing countries, as outlined in the report of the Expert on Space Applications (A/AC.105/625). The Subcommittee also noted that the General Assembly, in its resolution 50/27, had endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that the centres be established on the basis of affiliation to the United Nations as early as possible. The Subcommittee further noted that the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific had been inaugurated in India in November 1995 and that Brazil and Mexico had reached agreement on all aspects relating to the establishment of such a centre in Latin America and the Caribbean. Discussions were in progress with the parties concerned on the establishment of regional centres for space science and technology education in the regions of Africa, western Asia and Europe (A/AC.105/637, paras. 44-54).

(c) Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellite, including, inter alia, *applications for developing countries*

9. The Subcommittee continued its consideration of this item on a priority basis. The views expressed on the item at its thirty-third session are reflected in its report (A/AC.105/637, paras. 61-68). The Subcommittee recommended that the item should be retained on its agenda as a priority item for the next session (A/AC.105/637, para. 68).

(d) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space

10. The Subcommittee continued its consideration, on a priority basis, of the item on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The Subcommittee recalled that the General Assembly, by its resolution 47/68 of 14 December 1992, had adopted the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, contained in that resolution. The Subcommittee noted that the Committee, at its thirty-eighth session,[1] had recalled that, at its thirty-seventh session,[2] it had agreed that the Principles should remain in their current form until amended and that, before amendment, proper consideration should be given to the aims and objectives of any proposed revision. The Subcommittee agreed that, at the present time, revision of the Principles was not warranted (A/AC.105/637, para. 70).

11. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/27, paragraph 21, the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources was reconvened at the thirty-third session of the Subcommittee. No further work was undertaken in the Working Group at that session. The Subcommittee noted the statement made by the International Atomic Energy Agency, emphasizing the most recent international recommendations on radiation protection, and the new Safety Practice document on Emergency Planning and Preparedness for Re-Entry of a Nuclear-Powered Satellite, which was due to be published in its final form in 1996. The Subcommittee took note of the working papers submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the interpretation and development of safety principles for nuclear power sources in space (A/AC.105/C.1/L.203) and by the Russian Federation on the problem of collisions between nuclear power sources in space and space debris (A/AC.105/C.1/L.204), as well as the information submitted by Governments in response to General Assembly resolution 50/27, paragraph 21 (A/AC.105/619 and Add.1). The views expressed on the item are reflected in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/637, paras. 70-81). The Subcommittee recommended that the item be retained on its agenda for the next session (A/AC.105/637, para. 81).

(e) Space debris

12. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/27, the Subcommittee continued its consideration, on a priority basis, of the item on space debris.

13. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the report prepared by the Secretariat on steps taken by space agencies for reducing the growth or damage potential of space debris (A/AC.105/620) and recommended that it should be updated annually. The Subcommittee took note of the working paper by the Russian Federation

on the work done by scientists in that country on the problem of the technogenic pollution of near space (A/AC.105/C.1/L.205), as well as the information submitted by Governments in response to General Assembly resolution 50/27, referred to in paragraph 11 above. Recognizing the relevance of the work of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC), the Subcommittee agreed that IADC should be invited to give a presentation at the next session of the Subcommittee. The views expressed on the item are reflected in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/637, paras. 83-96 and 139-144).

14. In accordance with the multi-year plan for consideration of specific topics related to space debris, which it had adopted at its thirty-second session to implement with flexibility, the Subcommittee at its thirty-third session focused its attention on measurements of space debris, understanding of data and effects of that environment on space systems (A/AC.105/637, paras. 93 and 95). The Subcommittee prepared its technical report for 1996, concentrating on the current stage of the multi-year work plan. The report would be carried forward and updated each year, leading to an accumulation of advice and guidance, in order to establish a common understanding that could serve as the basis for further deliberations of the Committee on the matter (A/AC.105/637, para. 96). A chapter of the report that was subject to change and sections of the report to be completed at the next two sessions of the Subcommittee were presented in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/637, paras. 97-138).

(f) Questions relating to space transportation systems and their implications for future activities in space

15. In the course of its discussion on the item on space transportation systems, the Subcommittee took note of developments in the various programmes relating to such systems (A/AC.105/637, paras. 146-148). It recommended that consideration of the item be continued at its next session (A/AC.105/637, para. 152).

(g) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit; examination of its utilization and applications, including,* inter alia, *in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to space communications developments, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries

16. The Subcommittee continued its consideration of the item relating to the geostationary orbit. The views expressed are reflected in its report (A/AC.105/637, paras. 154-160). It recommended that consideration of the item be continued at its next session (A/AC.105/637, para. 160).

(h) Progress in national and international space activities related to the Earth environment, in particular progress in the geosphere-biosphere (global change) programme

(i) Matters relating to life sciences, including space medicine

(j) Matters relating to planetary exploration and matters relating to astronomy

17. The Subcommittee continued consideration of these items. The views expressed are reflected in its report (A/AC.105/637, paras. 162-166, 168-173 and 175-177). It recommended that consideration of the items be continued at its next session (A/AC.105/637, paras. 166, 173 and 177).

(k) The theme fixed for special attention at the 1996 session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee: "Utilization of micro- and small satellites for the expansion of low-cost space activities, taking into particular account the special needs of developing countries"

18. The Subcommittee paid special attention to the theme fixed for special attention at its 1996 session. It noted with satisfaction that, at its invitation, the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) had organized a symposium on the theme on 12 and

13 February 1996 (A/AC.105/637, para. 178). A summary of the presentations made as part of the symposium and of the special presentations arranged by delegations at the thirty-third session of the Subcommittee will be before the Commission at its thirty-ninth session (A/AC.105/638).

19. The Subcommittee selected the following theme for special attention at its thirty-fourth session (A/AC.105/637, para. 192 (g)): "Space systems for direct broadcasting and global information systems". The Subcommittee recommended that COSPAR and IAF, in liaison with Member States, should be invited to arrange a symposium on that theme, with as wide a participation as possible, to be held during the first week of the thirty-fourth session (A/AC.105/637, para. 193).

(l) Other matters

(i) Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

20. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/27, paragraph 32, agreed that a third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space could be convened before the turn of the present century and that, prior to recommending a date for the conference, there should be a consensus recommendation on the agenda, venue and funding of the conference. In paragraph 33 of the same resolution, the General Assembly recommended that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee continue the work it had conducted at its thirty-second session, the aim being to complete the development and refinement of a framework that would allow an evaluation of proposals by the Committee at its thirty-ninth session, and that that framework should allow for the consideration of all possibilities of achieving the final objectives of such a conference. In paragraph 34 of the same resolution, the General Assembly agreed that, on the basis of the work to be conducted at the thirty-third session of the Subcommittee, the Committee, at its thirty-ninth session, should consider all issues related to the possible convening of a third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, with a view to making a final recommendation to the General Assembly at that session of the Committee.

21. The Subcommittee, through its Working Group of the Whole, carried out the tasks entrusted to it by the General Assembly in resolution 50/27, paragraph 33. The Working Group considered the objectives and organization of the conference, other means to achieve the goals set for the conference and other ideas for the conference. In adopting the report of the Working Group (A/AC.105/637, annex II), the Subcommittee agreed that it provided the basis for the Committee to carry out the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly (A/AC.105/637, para. 185).

(ii) Working methods of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

22. The deliberations of the Subcommittee concerning its working methods are reflected in its report (A/AC.105/637, paras. 195-197). The Subcommittee agreed that progress had been made in improving its working methods and recommended that the Committee should give due consideration to the views expressed on the subject in performing its task of further improving the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies (A/AC.105/637, para. 197).

Item 6: Report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.105/639)

23. At its thirty-fifth session, the Legal Subcommittee, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/27, paragraph 4, considered items 3, 4 and 5, the deliberations of which are summarized in subsections (a), (b) and (c) below.

(a) Question of review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space

24. Noting the results of the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the subject of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space (see paragraphs 10 and 11 above), the Legal Subcommittee decided not to re-establish its Working Group. The Legal Subcommittee agreed that, at the present time, revision of the Principles was not warranted. It also agreed that, at its next session, consideration by the Working Group on the item should again be suspended for one year, pending the results of the work in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and that the item should, however, be retained on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee (A/AC.105/639, paras. 22-26).

(b) Matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union

25. The Legal Subcommittee, through its Working Group, continued its consideration of that item, including the replies from Member States to the questionnaire on possible legal issues with regard to aerospace objects (A/AC.105/635 and Add.1 and 2). A summary of the discussion in the Working Group is contained in the report of the Legal Subcommittee on its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.105.639, annex I). The Subcommittee endorsed the recommendation of the Working Group that the Secretariat should prepare, in time for the thirty-sixth session of the Subcommittee, a comprehensive analysis of the replies to the questionnaire that had been received, in order to assist the Working Group in its deliberations. With regard to the item on the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, the Subcommittee had before it a working paper submitted at its thirty-fifth session by Colombia (A/AC.105/C.2/L.200 and Corr.1). The Subcommittee endorsed the recommendation of the Working Group that the Secretariat, in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) secretariat, should provide, for the next session of the Working Group, an analysis of the compatibility of the approach contained in the above-mentioned working paper with the existing rules and procedures of ITU relating to the use of the geostationary orbit (A/AC.105/639, para. 35).

(c) Consideration of the legal aspects related to the application of the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries

26. The Legal Subcommittee, through its Working Group, continued its consideration of that item. The views expressed on the item are contained in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/639, annex II). The Subcommittee had before it a working paper submitted by Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Iraq, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Uruguay and Venezuela (A/AC.105/C.2/L.182/Rev.3) and a working paper submitted by France and Germany (A/AC.105/C.2/L.197/Rev.1). As a result of extensive informal consultations, the Chairman of the Working Group submitted to the Subcommittee a working paper (A/AC.105/C.2/L.202) containing a consolidated text produced by the sponsors of the two above-mentioned working papers (A/AC/105/639, paras. 38 and 41). The three working papers are contained in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC/105/639, annex III, sects. B, C and D).

(d) Other matters

27. Pursuant to a recommendation by the Legal Subcommittee at its thirty-fourth session (A/AC.105/607 and Corr.1, para. 53), the Subcommittee included an item in its agenda entitled "Other matters".

(i) Records of the Legal Subcommittee

28. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/27, paragraph 12, the Legal Subcommittee reviewed its requirements for summary records with a view to determining whether it might be possible to utilize unedited transcripts at its subsequent sessions. The Subcommittee recommended that, beginning with its thirty-sixth session, in 1997, it should be provided with verbatim (unedited) transcripts of its sessions in lieu of summary records (A/AC.105/639, paras. 43-44).

(ii) Working methods of the Legal Subcommittee

29. The deliberations of the Legal Subcommittee on the improvement of its working methods are reflected in its report (A/AC.105/639, paras. 46-51).

(e) New items for the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee

30. In accordance with the recommendation of the Legal Subcommittee contained in the report on its thirty-fourth session (A/AC.105/607 and Corr.1, para. 54), the Chairman of the Subcommittee conducted informal open-ended consultations, with all members of the Subcommittee, with a view to identifying, on the basis of consensus, a subject or a list of subjects that might be considered, in the future, for inclusion in the agenda of the Subcommittee. The discussions on the matter are reflected in the report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.105/639, paras. 53-57).

Item 7: Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

31. As mentioned in paragraph 6 above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee considered jointly on a priority basis, this item and the item on the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. The Subcommittee took note of the developments relating to the international space information service, technical studies, inter-agency coordination and cooperation and regional and interregional mechanisms of cooperation (A/AC.105/637, paras. 37-59).

32. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/27, paragraph 19, the Subcommittee reconvened the Working Group of the Whole to Evaluate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The Subcommittee adopted the report of the Working Group, containing conclusions and recommendations on the further implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 and the work of the Secretariat (A/AC.105/637, annex II). (See also paragraphs 20 and 21 above.)

Item 8: Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status

33. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/27, paragraph 42, requested the Committee to continue to consider at its thirty-ninth session its agenda item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status". Pursuant to the recommendation of the Committee at its thirty-sixth session, in 1993,[3] the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, in cooperation with the Government of the United States of America, held the United Nations/United States of America International Conference on Spin-off Benefits of Space Technology: Challenges and Opportunities, at Fort Collins, Colorado, United States, from 9 to 12 April 1996.

Item 9: Other matters

(a) Methods of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies

34. The General Assembly, in resolution 50/27, paragraph 9, endorsed the recommendations of the Committee contained in the report of its thirty-eighth session with regard to its working methods and to the reconvening of the Working Group of the Whole at its thirty-ninth session to examine the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.[4] (See also paragraphs 22, 30 and 31 above.)

(b) Observer status

35. The Planetary Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, has applied for observer status with the Committee. The related correspondence and the articles of incorporation of the above organization were circulated at the thirty-third session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee for the information of the member States of the Committee (A/AC.105/C.1/1996/CRP.3). Considerations on its observer status should take place at the thirty-ninth session of the Committee.

(c) Other reports

36. The Committee will have before it the report on the scientific and technical presentations to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-third session (A/AC.105/638). Additional reports may be submitted to the Committee as they become available. The Committee may wish to discuss other matters as appropriate.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/50/20), para. 186.

[2] Ibid., *Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/49/20), para. 68.

[3] Ibid., *Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/48/20), para. 119.

[4] Ibid., *Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/50/20), paras. 166-176.

Annex

INDICATIVE SCHEDULE OF WORK

Date	*Morning*		*Afternoon*	
Monday, 3 June			Item 1 Item 2 Item 3	Adoption of the agenda Statement by the Chairman General exchange of views
Tuesday, 4 June	Item 3	(continued)	Item 3	(continued)
Wednesday, 5 June	Item 4	Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes	Item 9 (a)	Other matters (Working Group of the Whole on working methods[a])
Thursday, 6 June	Item 4 Item 5[b] Item 7[b]	(continued) Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space	Item 5 Item 7	(continued) (continued)
Friday, 7 June	Item 5 Item 7	(continued) (continued)	Item 5 Item 7	(continued) (continued)
Monday, 10 June	Item 6	Report of the Legal Subcommittee	Item 9 (a)	Other matters (Working Group of the Whole on working methods[a])
Tuesday, 11 June	Item 6	(continued)	Item 6	(continued)
Wednesday, 12 June	Item 6 Item 8	(continued) Spin-off benefits of space technology	Item 8	(continued)
Thursday, 13 June	Item 9	Other matters	Item 9 Item 10	(continued) Report of the Committee to the General Assembly
Friday, 14 June	Item 10	(continued)	Item 10	(continued)

[a]In accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/27, paragraph 9, the Working Group of the Whole will be reconvened at the current session to examine the working methods of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies.

[b]As in the past, items 5 and 7 will be considered jointly.